

REMARKS

Applicant respectfully requests favorable reconsideration of this application, as amended.

As a preliminary matter, Applicant notes that the Information Disclosure Statement submitted on March 5, 2007 has not been acknowledged in the outstanding Office Action. Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner confirm consideration of the documents cited therein by returning a signed copy of Form PTO-1449 with the next official communication.

By this Amendment, Claims 1-3 and 5 have been editorially revised to address the alleged informalities and to improve the language in other respects. Claim 5 has also been amended to more particularly set forth certain distinctive features of Applicant's invention. Thus, Claims 1-5 are currently pending, with Claims 1, 3, and 5 being independent.

In the Office Action, Claims 1-5 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(f) as allegedly invented by another in view of Japanese publication JP 2004-017908. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection in view of the following discussion.

Japanese publication JP 2004-017908 is the publication for Applicant's foreign priority application JP 2002-179126.

Applicant is in fact the inventor named in the above mentioned Japanese publication. The alleged difference of inventorship noted by the Examiner relates to a translation error in the English abstract. The English translation of the Japanese characters for Applicant's name, Kiyoharu Higashino, may be different from the phonetic translation of the same characters. For example, Applicant's family name, signified by the Japanese characters 東野, can be phonetically translated as "Tohno" instead of "Higashino". Applicant's given name, signified by the Japanese characters 清明, can be phonetically translated as "Kiyoaki" instead of "Kiyoharu". However, regardless of the English translation, the underlying Japanese name is the same.

Supplied herewith are copies of the first pages for WIPO Publication WO 2004-000626 A1, which is the publication for the underlying international application in the present application, and Japanese publication JP 2004-017908. Item (75) of the WIPO publication and item (72) of the Japanese publication clearly show the same inventor, 東野 清明.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the rejection of the claims based on 35 U.S.C. § 102(f) be withdrawn.

In the Office Action, Claim 5 was further rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being allegedly anticipated by

Koyo (JP 57-022965). Without acceding to the rejection, Claim 5 has been amended more particularly to recite certain distinctive features of Applicant's invention. For example, Claim 5 has been amended to recite that the steering column includes an outer column and an inner column. The inner column is telescopically adjustably fitted in the outer column and movable toward a front of the vehicle with respect to a vehicle body side member in response to a secondary collision. The inner column is fitted with a ring that functions as a stopper so as to regulate a telescopic adjustment of the inner column, and also to absorb impact energy while frictionally sliding on the inner column when a secondary collision occurs.

It is apparent that the aforementioned features of amended Claim 5 are neither taught nor suggested by Koyo.

Accordingly, Claims 1-5 are in condition for allowance, and an early Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge to Deposit Account No. 50-1165 (XA-10232) any fees under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 and 1.17 that may be required by this paper and to credit any overpayment to that Account. If any extension of time is required in connection with the filing of this paper and has not been separately requested, such extension is hereby requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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